UNITED NATIONS

# Daily Highlights

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## TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Securing equality of women and men in law and in fact is twentieth century's great political project, Secretary-General tells Fourth World Conference on Women.

* NATO aircraft strike Bosnian Serb targets after deadline for withdrawal of heavy weapons from around Sarajevo is not met.

* Special Representative Vance to meet with foreign ministers of Greece and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia next week to conclude agreement on outstanding issues.

* More than 10,000 peace-keepers to withdraw from Croatia by mid-December.

* Department of Humanitarian Affairs issues set of proposals for action to resolve crisis in Rwanda's prisons.

* DPI publishes special edition of Yearbook of United Nations to commemorate Organization's fiftieth anniversary.

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Securing the equality of women and men in law and in fact is the great political project of the twentieth century, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In his statement to the Fourth World Conference on Women, which began yesterday in Beijing, he said the United Nations had been entrusted with a crucial role in realizing that project. The Secretary-General's statement was delivered by Special Adviser Ismat Kittani.

While equality before the law was being achieved in many countries, equality in fact remained an elusive goal in all countries, Mr. Boutros-Ghali continued. Discrimination on the basis of gender was widespread, and concrete steps were required to ensure equality of access to education, health care, jobs and political power. He noted that women worked longer hours for less pay and in lower-status jobs than men in almost every country. Seventy per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty in the world were women.

United States First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said today that those who had the opportunity to attend the Conference should speak up for those who could not. She called attention to the plight of women who were raising

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children while earning the minimum wage, those who could not afford health care, and those who were threatened with violence. She stressed that it was no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights.

Meanwhile, Chen Muhua of China has been elected President of the World Conference. Mrs. Chen is Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress of China and President of the Executive Committee of the All-China Women's Federation.

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North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aircraft today launched fresh strikes against Bosnian Serb targets after the deadline for the withdrawal of heavy weapons from around Sarajevo was not met. In a statement, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said the United Nations and NATO had jointly decided to continue the air operation to ensure the safety and security of the Bosnian safe areas. The relevant criterion was whether the Bosnian Serbs were withdrawing their weapons from the 20-kilometre exclusion zone around the Bosnian capital. He warned that the air strikes would only cease when, in the common judgement of United Nations and NATO commanders, the objectives of the operation had been attained.

The Secretary-General reiterated his call to the Bosnian Serbs to quickly bring an end to the bloodshed. The United Nations remained firmly committed to a negotiated and durable solution of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the interests of all its peoples. If the Bosnian Serb military leaders persisted in their intransigence, the Organization would continue to support the use of NATO air power to end the suffering of civilians in the safe areas. "The alternative is a continuation of the NATO air operation, with consequences the Bosnian Serbs fully understand," he stressed. "The choice is theirs."

Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts to end the Bosnian conflict were intensifying, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Carl Bildt, each met with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade yesterday. Mr. Bildt then went to Zagreb to meet with Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and the Commander of United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), General Bernard Janvier. He was in Naples today to confer with NATO Admiral Leighton Smith.

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Special Representative Cyrus Vance will meet in New York next week with the foreign ministers of Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to conclude an agreement resolving outstanding issues between the two countries. The agreement will be the culmination of more than two years of mediation efforts under Security Council resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993).

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Mr. Vance told correspondents at Headquarters today that the agreement would settle a broad variety of issues, although the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be the subject of further discussions. He expressed the hope that it would form a basis for good relations between the parties and have a positive effect throughout the region.

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More than 10,300 United Nations Confidence Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) troops will return home over the next eight weeks, a spokesman for the Organization said today. Battalions from Nepal, Argentina, Kenya and Jordan will leave Croatia in the first phase of the withdrawal, followed by troops from Canada, Jordan, Denmark, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic and Bangladesh.

Two battalions of troops from Belgium and the Russian Federation will remain in Croatia, along with some support elements and a headquarters staff. UNCRO will retain its responsibilities with regard to the Prevlaka Peninsula, the monitoring of the international border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Sector East.

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The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has issued a set of proposals for action to resolve the crisis in Rwanda's prisons. It noted that some 50,000 Rwandans were being held in 215 places of detention, and that hundreds had died as a result of overcrowding. Meanwhile, the judicial system remained paralyzed and no genocide trials had begun.

The Department proposed that conditions of detention be improved by: providing slippers, sheeting, clothing and pallets for detainees; accelerating the conversion of six sites into temporary detention centres; and immediately beginning the construction of longer-term detention centres. At the same time, the Rwandan Government should take urgent action aimed at: ensuring proper arrest procedures; establishing a detention policy; strengthening the judicial process; and ensuring the security of released detainees.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) has published a special edition of the Yearbook of the United Nations to commemorate the Organization's fiftieth anniversary. The special edition covers the entire history of the United Nations and considers present and future challenges. It highlights major achievements in the last 50 years in the areas of international peace and security, development of international law, disarmament and decolonization, as well as in the economic and social fields.

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